

Organic Agriculture In New Hampshire



OVERVIEW

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments in U.S. agriculture. From 1992 through 2005, the acres of certified organic cropland rose from 403,000 to more than 1.7 million; organically certified pasture acres rose from 532,000 to over 4 million; and the total number of organic certified livestock rose from 11,000 in 1992 to over 196,000.

In New Hampshire, the value of organic agricultural sales totaled over \$16 million in 2007, up from \$1.154 million in 2002.

As compared with conventional agricultural production techniques, organic farming practices typically result in improved water quality, healthy animals, reduced soil erosion and overall improved soil quality. Soil organic matter is increased by using manures and compost as fertilizers, growing cover crops and green manure, practicing crop rotations, and by growing more acres of perennial crops. Water quality is often improved by the avoidance of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

If you are interested in making your organic operation environmentally sustainable, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has the technical and financial resources to help you reach your conservation goals.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The 2008 Farm Bill highlights the availability of financial and technical assistance to help all producers meet their conservation goals. It specifically includes help to organic agricultural producers. It also offers rewards for producers who already practice good stewardship on their land.

CONSERVATION PLANNING

For more than 70 years, NRCS (known as the Soil Conservation Service until 1994) has placed a high priority on helping agricultural producers with conservation plans to meet their environmental and economic goals, while concurrently planning for the protection of the soil, water, air and wildlife resources.

Conservation goals are highly individual and may include boosting pollinator populations, increasing biodiversity including soil-borne organisms, enhancing water quality,

controlling invasive species and dozens of other resource-enhancing possibilities.

NRCS conservationists work with farmers to come up with scientifically-sound alternatives for accomplishing their goals and working out a timeline to implement the conservation practices in the plan. This process begins with a free on-site visit by NRCS to the land to

discuss the producer's goals and identify areas needing work.

Useful practices for organic farmers include pest management, cover cropping, micro irrigation, composting facilities, nutrient management plans, crop rotation, prescribed grazing, and fencing.

All information provided to NRCS for conservation planning purposes is strictly confidential.

Implementation may be partially funded through competitive Farm Bill programs such as the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

More...



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Helping People Help The Land

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AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program assists agricultural producers to manage risk and voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations. AMA helps mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program for farmers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

For more information,
Call or stop by your area NRCS office,
Or visit <http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov>

USDA-NRCS/Conservation District Offices

Belknap County Conservation District

719 North Main St., Rm. 203, Laconia, NH 03246
603-527-5880

Concord Field Service Center

Merrimack County Conservation District

10 Ferry St., Suite 211, Concord, NH 03301
603-223-6021

Conway Field Service Center

Carroll County Conservation District

73 Main St., Conway, NH 03818
603-447-2771

Epping Field Service Center

Knightly Plaza
629 Calef Highway, Suite 203
Epping, NH 03042
603-679-1587

Lancaster Field Service Center

Coos County Conservation District

4 Mayberry Lane, Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4651

New Hampshire State Office

2 Madbury Rd.
Durham, NH 03824
603-868-7581

Milford Field Service Center

Hillsborough County Conservation District

Chappell Professional Ctr., #468, Rte. 13 South,
Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409

Orford Field Service Center

Grafton County Conservation District

19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4651

Rockingham County Conservation District

110 North Road, Brentwood, NH 03833
603-679-2790

Sullivan County Conservation District

24 Main Street, Newport, NH 03773
603-863-4297

Strafford County Conservation District

259 County Farm Rd, Unit #3, Dover, NH 03820
603-749-3037

Walpole Field Service Center

Cheshire County Conservation District

11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988